

Health and Safety

All licensed child care programs, including homes, are visited at least once per year by DCDEE staff to make sure the program is in compliance with all child care regulations, including health and safety standards. DCDEE staff monitor health and safety standards such as whether or not the facility is hygienic, the toys and play equipment are in good repair, and that hazards such as cleaning solutions are out of reach of the children. DCDEE also has consultants who investigate complaints related to child care requirements.

Need to Know More?

A good way to begin a search for child care is to visit the DCDEE website at www.ncchildcare.net. The website provides more details about child care programs and a search tool for child care programs by name, type of care, license and location. Information about child care visits, including complaints and investigations of facilities is also available online, or at the Division's office in Raleigh. Copies of program files can be requested by calling DCDEE at **919-662-4499** or by submitting an electronic request via the DCDEE Website.

Visit the Parents' Page on the DCDEE website at www.ncchildcare.net and click on the Parents tab at the top of the page for a copy of the helpful checklist of questions to ask and what to look for when visiting a program.



North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Child Development & Early Education
2201 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2201

Location Address :
319 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120, Raleigh, NC 27603

919.662.4499 / 800.859.0829 (In-State only)
Fax: 919.661.4845

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Some Questions to Ask

Here are some questions you can ask to get a sense of the quality of child care provided in a particular program:

Staff Education:

- What kind of education does your staff have?
- In what kind of ongoing education does your staff participate?

Program Standards:

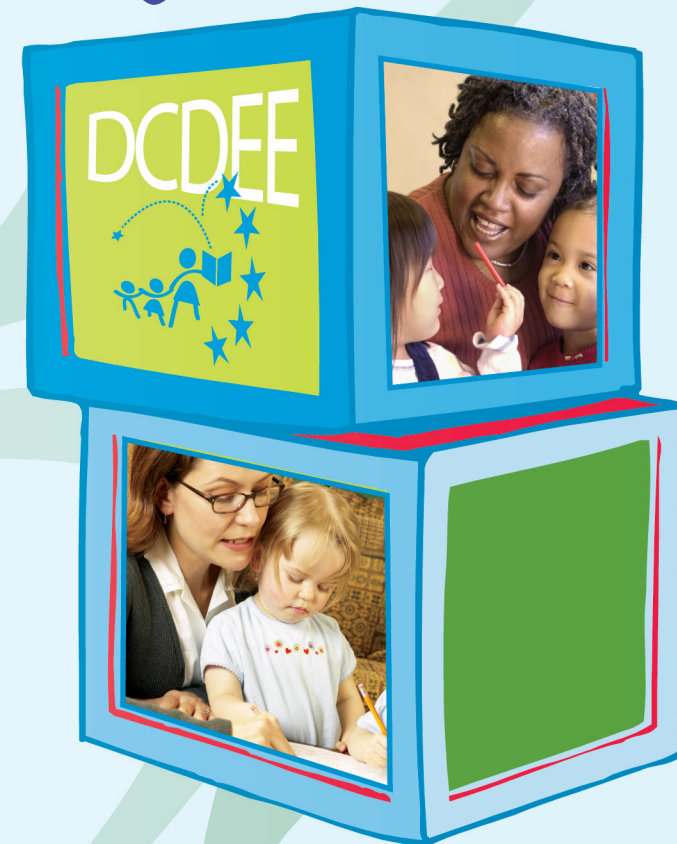
- How do you handle nap time?
- What is a typical day like at your program?
- What kind of flexibility do you have to accommodate a baby's natural schedule regarding eating habits and diapering needs?
- How do you handle toilet training?
- How do you discipline children?
- How many other children will be with my child?
- What types of play or learning activities do you have for children in my child's age group?
- How do you handle homework for school-age children?
- What is your policy for caring for children's medical needs?
- Do you administer medication to sick infants and toddlers?
- How will you communicate with me about my child's day?

Call or visit the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for help finding quality child care in a specific area. A list of these agencies can be found on the Parent Resource page on the Division's website at www.ncchildcare.net.

The local Smart Start partnership can also help with questions about child care and other parenting information. To locate the nearest partnership, visit www.ncsmartstart.org or call 919-821-7999.

For help paying for child care, contact the local county department of social services or go to www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss and click on "Local DSS Directory."

Choosing Quality Child Care



is One of the Most...
**Important Decisions You
Will Ever Make**

Choosing Quality Child Care...

for children of all ages, birth to 12, is an important decision. Quality child care helps build a strong foundation that contributes to a child's future success and the future success of North Carolina. Quality care provides children with a wide range of enriching experiences that are vital for his or her growth and development.

Why Does Quality Child Care Matter?

The early years of life matter because early experiences affect how the brain is built. As a child's brain grows, the quality of the experiences that a child has creates either a sturdy or fragile foundation for all of the development and behavior that follow. Parents want to make educated choices for their families, and getting things right the first time is better than trying to fix them later.

High quality experiences promote children's social, emotional, physical, communication, and cognitive development, and lay the foundation for later success in life. That's why the State of North Carolina has established the Five Star Rated License System for child care.

Rating North Carolina Child Care

The Division of Child Development & Early Education (DCDEE) and the North Carolina Child Care Commission have created the Five Star Rated License System to help identify quality child care. Parents can look at a posted license and determine the quality of child care a licensed program provides.

What Is a Quality Child Care Program?

Scientific research has shown that the most important components of a high quality program are the educational levels of staff and the activities that occur on a daily basis with children.

No matter the age of the child, staff education and program environment make a difference. The North Carolina Star Rated License includes both of these key components.

Staff Education

Child care providers with more early childhood education and experience can provide a child with a more enriching child care experience and are more sensitive in the relationships they establish with children.

Program Standards

The daily environment for a child is impacted by many things such as small numbers of children with each child care provider, having appropriate activities to participate in each day, rooms that are big enough for the children to move around easily, and following good health practices, like frequent hand washing for both teachers and children. Asking questions and observing will provide more information about the program's daily routine.

More Stars = Higher Quality

Here's a sample license:



One star means that a child care program meets North Carolina's minimum standards.

Two to five stars means that a program has been evaluated for, and met, higher standards.

Find more detailed Information about the North Carolina Star Rated License System at the Division's web site at www.ncchildcare.net

